

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-13

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AMEMBASSY LISBON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 003180

NESCO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AORG, UNESCO

SUBJECT: UNESCO: MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR PINTASILGO,
PORTUGUESE MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. AMBASSADOR PINTASILGO MET WITH IO ASSISTANT SECRETARY
LEWIS ON JANUARY 3 FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF IN A CORDIAL,
FRANK, AND EXTREMELY USEFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

2. DURING DISCUSSION, AMBASSADOR MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. WHILE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI
WITNESSED IMPRESSIVE DEGREE OF COOPERATION AMONG WESTERN
COUNTRIES, THERE IS STILL NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT--BOTH
PRIOR TO AND DURING SUCH CONFERENCES--AND USG SHOULD
CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TOWARD THIS END.

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B. SINCE THE REVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL, GOP HAS BUILT UP
EXCELLENT ACCESS TO MANY AFRICAN AND ARAB COUNTRIES,
INCLUDING SOME RADICALS. THUS EVEN THOUGH SERIOUS
DOMESTIC ECONOMIC SITUATION PLACES SEVERE LIMITS ON WHAT
PORTUGAL CAN DO IN UNESCO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANI-
ZATIONS, PORTUGAL HAS OPPORTUNITIES TO RECEIVE HEARINGS,

AS WELL AS SOUNDINGS, WHICH ARE NOT OPEN TO MANY WEO'S.

C. SHE HOPED U.S. CONGRESS AND PUBLIC REALIZED EXTENT TO WHICH SOVIETS SUFFERED SERIOUS DEFEAT IN NAIROBI--NOT ONLY ON MASS MEDIA ISSUE, BUT ON BROAD RANGE OF SUBJECTS. SOVIET RECORD WAS SO BAD THAT PORTUGUESE AND OTHER WESTERN DELEGATIONS CONSIDERED IT INEVITABLE SOVIETS WOULD REACT STRONGLY. PORTUGUESE WERE NOT SURPRISED, THEREFORE, BY ORIGINAL DRAFT RESOLUTION ON OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, KNOWING THERE WAS STRONG SOVIET HAND BEHIND THAT DRAFT. (LEWIS EXPRESSED DOUBT ON LATTER POINT, BUT AMBASSADOR STUCK BY VIEWS.)

D. SHE IS ANXIOUS TO HAVE EXECUTIVE BOARD PLAY A GREATER AND MORE INDEPENDENT ROLE. SHE HOPES U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES WILL COOPERATE IN FINDING WAYS TO STIFFEN BACKBONE OF BOARD. TOO OFTEN, BOARD SIMPLY ACCEPTS SUGGESTIONS OF SECRETARIAT, WHICH ARE ALWAYS WELL PREPARED, WITHOUT THINKING THEM THROUGH. SHE CAN'T SWALLOW THIS AND WANTS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

E. WESTERN COUNTRIES SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO IMPORTANCE OF IDEOLOGY IN UNESCO CONTACTS. THE RUSSIANS REMAIN IDEOLOGICAL FANATICS EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT VERY ADEPT AT ADVANCING THEIR IDEOLOGY. AT SAME TIME, WESTERNERS DO POOR JOB OF COUNTERING RUSSIANS AND THEIR MARXIST FOLLOWERS IN THIRD WORLD--IN LARGE PART BECAUSE PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO WESTERN MISSIONS TOO OFTEN LACK A BROAD HISTORICAL/PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND WHICH ENABLES

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THEM TO ZERO IN ON SHALLOW AND SUPERFICIAL MARXIST ARGUMENTS.

F. AS TO QUALITY OF SECRETARIAT PERSONNEL, SHE CONSIDERS NAJMAN ONLY STRONG ASSISTANT DIR GEN. SHE COMMENTED LATER THAT BOTH M'BOW AND NAJMAN ARE FORCEFUL PERSONALITIES AND THAT THIS MAY BE AT ROOT OF RECENT INDICATIONS OF FRICTION BETWEEN THEM. EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION PRINCIPLE RESULTS IN GETTING MANY MEDIOCRE OR INCOMPETENT PEOPLE INTO SECRETARIAT. IN TOO MANY CASES, PERSONNEL ARE SECURE AND FIXED IN THEIR JOBS AND FAIL TO MAINTAIN HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS REQUIRED TO BE EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELDS AND TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH OUTSIDE EXPERTS. ONE STEP TO REMEDY THIS WOULD BE GREATER ROTATION IN AND OUT OF UNESCO.

3. LEWIS STRESSED GREAT DIFFICULTY WE FACE HERE IN EXPLAINING WHY GENERAL CONFERENCE RECONFIRMED CONDEMNA-

TION OF ISRAELI POLICIES IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES IN
ABSENCE OF ANY INVESTIGATION OR VERIFYING EVIDENCE.

IT IS ALREADY CLEAR THIS ACTION WILL CAUSE US GREAT DIFFI-
CULTY IN TRYING TO PERSUADE CONGRESS THAT PROGRESS IN
NAIROBI WAS SUFFICIENT TO AGREE TO PRESIDENT'S REQUEST
FOR RESTORATION OF FULL FUNDING FOR UNESCO. IT IS ALSO
POSSIBLE THIS ACTION COULD LEAD ISRAEL TO RETRACT ITS
EARLIER AGREEMENT TO RECEIVE REPS OF DIR GEN M'BOW TO
LOOK INTO SITUATION IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

4. IN EXPLAINING PORTUGUESE SUPPORT FOR OCCUPIED TERRI-
TORIES RESOLUTION, AMBASSADOR DID NOT SEEK REFUTE LEWIS'
POINTS; INSTEAD, SHE GAVE EXPLANATION WHICH BOILED DOWN
TO RELUCTANCE TO GO AGAINST ARABS AND DESIRE TO RECOGNIZE
AFRICANS' SUCCESS IN MODERATING INITIAL, VERY HARSH DRAFT.

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5. FOR REASONS NOTED PARA 3, LEWIS SAID IT VERY IMPORTANT
THAT THERE BE CONTINUING SIGNS OF PROGRESS ON ISRAELI-
RELATED ISSUES OR ON MATTER OF DEPOLITICIZATION. WE ARE
CONSIDERING, THEREFORE, HOW SUCH PROGRESS MIGHT BE
ACHIEVED AT APRIL-MAY MEETING OF EXECUTIVE BOARD. ONE
POSSIBILITY, DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE AND PRECEDENT OF
DRAFTING AND NEGOTIATING GROUP AT NAIROBI, WOULD BE FOR
BOARD TO DEVISE PROCEDURE WHEREBY ALL RESOLUTIONS FOR
FUTURE GENERAL CONFERENCES WOULD BE SCREENED BY BOARD IN
ADVANCE--WEEDING OUT THOSE THAT ARE UNCONSTITUTIONAL OR
OTHERWISE OUT OF ORDER. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WOULD BE FOR
THE BOARD TO MAKE A FINDING ABOUT THE CESSATION OF EXCAVA-
TIONS IN JERUSALEM WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE DIR GEN TO
RESCIND THE SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL. ALTHOUGH THE
AMBASSADOR AGREED THE DNG EXPERIENCE WAS ONE TO BE BUILT
ON, SHE HAD NO REACTION TO THESE SUGGESTIONS.

6. THROUGHOUT MEETING, AMBASSADOR PINTASILGO EXPRESSED
ADMIRATION FOR U.S. MISSION TO UNESCO AND GAVE EVIDENCE
OF SINCERE DESIRE TO WORK WITH U.S. AND BE AS HELPFUL
AS POSSIBLE.
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